



Psychometric properties of teachers' attitudes toward reporting child sexual abuse scale: Turkish form¹

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Abstract: Child sexual abuse is a traumatic experience that has a negative impact on mental and physical health. Studies aimed at preventing sexual abuse also involve reporting the abuse; this way the recurrence of abuse may be prevented. Teachers play a significant role for school-age children and adolescents because they are adults that can be trusted and asked for help. Therefore, important to understand specially teachers' attitudes when teachers reporting sexual abuse case. The aim of this study is to introduce into Turkish the 14-item version of the Teachers' Attitudes toward Reporting Child Sexual Abuse scale that Walsh et al. (2012) had obtained after running a factor analysis and then present it to the field for use in teacher-oriented studies. According to finding results, the scale is a valid and reliable measure for Turkish elementary school teachers.

Keywords: Mandatory reporting, child sexual abuse, conformity factor analysis

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INTRODUCTION

Child sexual abuse is a traumatic experience that has a negative impact on mental and physical health in Turkey (Çıkılı-Uytun and Öztop, 2016; Koçtürk and Bilge, 2017); as well as the world in general (Stottenborg, Van IJzendoorn, Euser, and Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2011). Although different research results exist pertaining to its prevalence, the percentage of individuals who have been exposed to sexual abuse in their childhood varies between 10% and 40% (Aktepe, 2009). However, these rates are presumed to be below the real child sexual abuse rates, as many individuals who have been sexually abused are presumed to refrain from mentioning it (Koçak and Alparlan, 2015). Feelings of shame and guilt, fear of being labeled in society, thinking that the abuser will go unpunished, and failing to recognize certain types of behavior as sexual abuse can be counted among the prominent reasons for this (Aktepe, 2009).

Sexual abuse experienced during childhood has many effects on mental and physical health, both long- and short-term (Ayraller-Taner, Çetin, Işık, and İşeri, 2015). While in some cases of sexual abuse the result is the quick death of the child (Demirci, Doğan, Deniz, Erkol, and Erdogan, 2009), in most cases the resulting effect can be life-long depression and anxiety disorders (Ayraller-Taner et al., 2015; Çıkılı-Uytun and Oztop, 2016). In a study including 107 participants, Ayraller-Taner et al. (2015) stated the most common psychiatric diagnoses for sexually abused children to be depression, PTSD, generalized anxiety disorder, acute stress disorder, and behavioral disorders. Also a positive correlation has been found between the development of psychiatric disorders and certain factors such as having had a psychiatric diagnosis prior to the incident of abuse, the offender being an acquaintance outside of the family, the abuse involving penetration, the recurrence of sexual abuse, and the sexual abuse involving violence. Some mental health problems faced in adulthood by individuals who have been sexually abused during childhood have been reported as personality disorders, self-harm, and substance abuse (Dolan and Whitworth, 2011). This input highlights only the part of the results

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from sexual abuse experienced during childhood concerning mental health. Loss of function and social and economic inadequacies are some other short- and long-term results of sexual abuse (Barrett, Kamiya, and O'Sullivan, 2014).

Apart from studies aimed at mental disorders stemming from sexual abuse and their treatments, many studies are found that aim to prevent sexual abuse (Brown, 2017; Jin, Chen, Jiang, and Yu, 2017; Kim and Kang, 2017). Among these, the most prominent are child- and parent-oriented psychoeducation programs and privacy training sessions, as well as studies aimed at helping teachers recognize and report sexual abuse (Crosson-Tower, 2003).

Studies aimed at preventing sexual abuse also involve reporting the abuse; this way the recurrence of abuse may be prevented (Wurtele, Kast, and Melzer, 1992). Reporting abuse has been found to contribute to preventing its recurrence because child sexual abuse, unlike adult sexual abuse, includes the possibility of the offender being an adult or another child who is older and developmentally superior to the victim (Yenisey et al., 2011). In most child sexual abuse cases the offender is someone the child knows, an acquaintance or family member; this not only makes repeated abuse easier but also occurs as a factor that can prevent abuse from being reported (Yiğit, 2005).

Teachers play a significant role for school-age children and adolescents because they are adults that can be trusted and asked for help (McGrath, Cappelli, Wiseman, Khalil, and Allan, 1987). Especially in cases where the offender is a family member, the position of the teacher as an adult the child knows, trusts, and can get help from is indispensable in preventing, recognizing, and intervening in sexual abuse (Walsh, Bridgstock, Farrell, and Schweitzer, 2005).

Kenny (2001) stated in his study that only one out of four teachers has never reported child abuse during their professional life and teachers on average report sexual abuse once. Some teachers who participated in the study and who had never reported abuse stated that even though they had suspected abuse and neglect they never reported it. In the study, the reasons teachers listed for avoiding reporting abuse were: fear of writing a false report, belief that the authorities would not help the child/parents, and absence of any visible indications of abuse.

In a study both retrospectively and prospectively investigating the factors that affect teachers when reporting child sexual abuse, teachers who had actually reported abuse in the past were found to have high levels of information about the procedure, and their commitment to the role of reporting, faith in the system at responding to the reports effectively, and reassurance about the results of the reports were noted to increase their positive attitudes towards reporting. The results obtained from the study's hypothetical-scenarios section showed that having reasonable grounds, acknowledging that significant harm had been done to the child, being aware that school rules require reporting, and being assured about the results are necessary for reporting suspected sexual abuse (Walsh, Mathews, Rassafiani, Farrell, and Butler, 2012). In a study investigating the information and beliefs teachers have concerning child sexual abuse (Marquez-Florez, Marquez-Fernandez and Granados-Gamez, 2015), teachers' false information and beliefs were found to affect their behaviors for recognizing and reporting child sexual abuse, such as the assumptions that the offender has to have pathological traits and cannot control their behaviors, that the victim and the offender cannot be of the same age, and that the sexual abuse is supposed to be accompanied by violent behavior. Researchers reported that more than half the teachers who had participated in the study had not been trained in recognizing and reporting sexual abuse; the results of that study reveal the need for educating teachers.

In Turkey, teachers' legal responsibilities concerning reporting child sexual abuse are specified in Article 6 of the Child Protection Law through the statement, "Judicial and administrative authorities, police officers, and health and education institutions are obligated to report the child in need of protection to the Ministry of Family and Social Policies," and in Article 279 of the Turkish Penal Law with the statement, "Any public official who learns of a crime that requires investigation and prosecution through his/her employment and neglects or delays reporting it to the lawful authorities will be sentenced from six months to two years of prison time."

Türk, Yavuz-Birben, and Eksi's (2017) study in Turkey in which 226 teachers participated stated 84% of them stated feeling being informed about child abuse reporting to be necessary. When asking school psychological counselors about their assessments of the education they had received concerning child abuse, they were seen to consider their education inadequate and too abstract, feeling the need for a more systematic, inter-disciplinary, and supervision-oriented education. In a study aimed at investigating teachers' attitudes and behaviors towards child sexual abuse, Özgül (2015) reported that the participants had never received any training on recognizing, reporting, or intervening in child sexual abuse; a small number of the participants had received brief in-service training after having started practicing their profession but had found this training inadequate. A significant number of them did not know what to do when encountering child sexual abuse, and all participants were in need of training on this issue. In another study about reporting child sexual abuse, Aksel and Yilmaz-Irmak (2015) reported only 32% of teachers to have received training on child abuse, and only 9% of these found the education satisfactory. While the percentage of teachers who had received in-service training was 30%, about 70% of these received training on sexual abuse.

When reviewing all the data in the literature, the key position teachers hold in preventing, reporting, and intervening in child sexual abuse (McGrath et al., 1987) and the fact that this position is not used effectively due in part to their lack of training (Özgül, 2015) show the importance of conducting studies on this issue.

The current version of the Teacher Reporting Attitude Scale for Child Sexual Abuse with its specified subscales titled with regard to teachers has been thought to bridge a substantial gap both in identifying teachers and prospective teachers' training requirements on child sexual abuse and also in measuring the effectiveness of the training courses provided as a part of the undergraduate curriculum or as in-service training. In addition, this assessment instrument is considered to be a major help in measuring the effectiveness of studies aimed at changing teachers' attitudes toward sexual abuse and in identifying the requirements for developing subsequent studies.

Before running factor analysis, the original form of the Teachers' Reporting Attitude Scale for Child Sexual Abuse and its subscales were specified to consist of 21 items (Walsh, Rassafiani, Mathews, Farrell, and Butler, 2010). The scale was adapted to Turkish with a Turkish validity and reliability study having been conducted by Akgül (2015). The 8-item version of the scale, which had been revised by Choo, Walsh, China, and Tey (2013) in Malaysia, was adapted to Turkish with the title "Çocuğa Yönelik Cinsel İstismar Tutum Ölçeği" (Akın et al., 2013). The aim of this study is to introduce into Turkish the 14-item version of the scale that Walsh et al. (2012) had obtained after running a factor analysis and then present it to the field for use in teacher-oriented studies. The reason why the 21-item version of the scale was not used in this study was that this version was prepared as a item pool.

METHOD

Participants

The research group of the study consists of classroom teachers working at Turkey. The research group consisting of 269 classroom teachers was formed through the snowball sampling method. The fact that the study sample consists of adult individuals makes it difficult to reach them collectively. It is also not easy to reach teachers who will volunteer to participate in the study. therefore, it was thought that carrying this study to the participants through the people they knew and trusted would make the study more easier. Verbal consent was obtained from the participants after they had been informed about the study. The participants' average age is 30, ranging from 22 to 59.

Table 1.*Participants' Demographics*

Variables	Groups	N	%
Gender	Female	203	75.5
	Male	66	24.5
School Type	Public school	209	77.7
	Private school	60	22.3
Socioeconomic Status	Low	95	35.3
	Middle	157	58.4
	High	17	6.3

Insturments

Melbourne Decision-Making Questionnaire

This was developed by Mann, L., Radford, M., Burnett, P., Ford, S., Bond, M., Leung, K., et al. (1998) to assess self-confidence and the four different styles in decision making and has been adapted into Turkish by Deniz (2004). The questionnaire consists of two parts, the first assessing self-respect (self-confidence) in decision making and the second assessing the four different decision-making styles. The options for answering the statements in the questionnaire are "True," "Sometimes True," and "Not True" and are graded 2, 1, and 0, respectively. The first part of the questionnaire consists of six items, and the highest score that can be received from this section is 12. The score received from this section shows the level of self-confidence involved in decision making. The second part of the questionnaire consists of subscales assessing the decision-making styles of Vigilance (six items), Hypervigilance (six items), Procrastination (five items), and Buck Passing (five items). Cronbach alpha values range are .65-.80.

Scale of Attitude Toward Child Rights

This was developed by Karaman- Kepekçi (2006) to assess attitudes toward children's right to life, development, protection, and participation. It is a self-report measure in the form of 5-point Likert scale with 22 items. The higher the score received from the questionnaire indicates higher negative attitudes toward children's rights. The 22 items are gathered under one factor. Three of these (Items 2, 14, and 15) are reverse-scored items. Karaman-Kepekçi reported the total item-correlation coefficients for the items in the questionnaire to vary between .32 and .61, Cronbach's alpha of internal consistency coefficient to be .85, and the split-half reliability test coefficient to be .77.

Teacher Reporting Attitude Scale for Child Sexual Abuse

This is the 21-item scale developed by Walsh, Rassafiani, Mathews, Farrell, and Butler (2010). The same researchers, after examining the exploratory factor analysis and psychometric features of the scale, found the scale to have a 3-factor structure and subsequently reduced the number of items to 14. The revealed variance analysis of the three factors was found as 37.5%. They also found correlation values for the commitment sub-dimension as 0.77, trust sub-dimension as 0.62 and anxiety sub-dimension as 0.66. Items 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 11 are reverse-scored in the scale. Higher scores show more positive attitudes toward reporting. Commitment to the role of reporter is assessed by Items 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8; trust in the system to respond effectively to the reporting is assessed by Items 9, 11, and 13; and anxiety over the results of

reporting is assessed by Items 2, 3, 10, 12, and 14. The total internal validity of the score has been estimated as .76, while the correlation among items is estimated as .21. No information has been found about criterion validity.

Procedure

This study aims to adapt the Teacher Reporting Attitude Scale for Child Sexual Abuse (TRAS-CSA) into Turkish. At the beginning of the adaptation process, the purpose of the study in which this scale is to be used was explained to the researchers who had developed it, and the necessary consent was obtained from them. After getting the necessary permissions for adapting the scale into Turkish, the translation and reverse translation were done by 10 experts working on their masters' degrees in the fields of psychological counseling or guidance and psychology who are fluent in both languages. The appropriateness of the statements in Turkish was examined by five literature teachers, and the necessary grammatical corrections and adjustments for the comprehensibility of the sentences were made.

Validity and reliability studies

Construct validity and criterion validity of the TRAS-CSA were examined as part of the validity studies. Confirmatory factor analysis was run in order to specify the factor structure of the scale for structure validity. The correlation among the Melbourne Decision-Making Questionnaire, Child Rights Questionnaire, TRAS-CSA was examined in order to determine the criterion validity of the scale. LISREL 8.7 was used run the validity analyses of the scale. Cronbach's alpha for total score was calculated in order to determine the reliability level of the scale.

RESULTS

Construct Validity

Confirmatory factor analysis, which can be shown as proof of the validity of a measured structure, has been structured using the three sub-factor model and the package software program, LISREL 8.7. The sub-factors are: commitment to the role of reporter, trust in the system to respond effectively to the reporting, and anxiety over the results from reporting. In the measurement model, indicator-related factor loading values confirm were equalized to 1.00. RMSEA, GFI, and AGFI values have been calculated.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and the measurement model have been confirmed to adequately fit the data (Goodness of Fit Index [GFI] \geq 0.90, Comparative Fit Index [CFI] \geq 0.90, and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation [RMSEA] \leq 0.06; Brown, 2006; Hu and Bentler, 1999). In addition, the value obtained by dividing the Chi-square (χ^2) value by the degree of freedom (χ^2/df) being equal to or less than 2 is indicative of good fit (Şimşek, 2007).

Accordingly, after conducting CFA for the 14 item version of the scale, the χ^2/df being found as 1.80 ($<$ 2), GFI as 0.93 ($>$ 0.90), CFI as 0.90 (\geq 0.90), and RMSEA as 0.05 ($<$ 0.06) show data fit to be at an acceptable level (Brown, 2006). Also, the path diagram and standardized path coefficients are given in Figure 1. The results of CFA show the scale to have three dimensions (NFI= 0.81; NNFI = 0.88; PNFI = 0.66; CFI = 0.90; IFI = 0.90; RFI = 0.77; CN = 204.11; RMSEA = 0.052; SRMSR = 0.058; GFI = 0.93; AGFI = 0.91; PGFI = 0.66). Because Item 7 was reversed, and the factor value was too low, it has been excluded. The item is "Child sexual abuse reporting guidelines are necessary for teachers". When the answers given to this item were examined, it was seen that almost all of the participants's answers were "completely agree". Therefore, the item does not appear to be distinctive. The reason of this; there is currently lack of such a guide in Turkey. In addition, when Walsh, who developed the scale, was asked about the situation through mail, he also stated that the item had to be removed. The researcher's idea of removing based on lack of guide in Turkey.

After item 7 has been excluded the CFA for the 13 item version of the scale, χ^2/df being found as 1.97 ($<$ 2), GFI as 0.93 ($>$ 0.90), CFI as 0.90 (\geq 0.90), and RMSEA as 0.06 (\leq 0.60) show data fit to be at an acceptable level (Brown, 2006). Also, the path diagram and standardized path

coefficients are given in Figure 2. The results of CFA show the scale to have three dimensions (NFI= 0.82; NNFI = 0.87; PNFI = 0.65; CFI = 0.90; IFI = 0.90; RFI = 0.78; CN = 192.15; RMR = 0.05; SRMR = 0.06; GFI = 0.93; AGFI = 0.90; PGFI = 0.64).

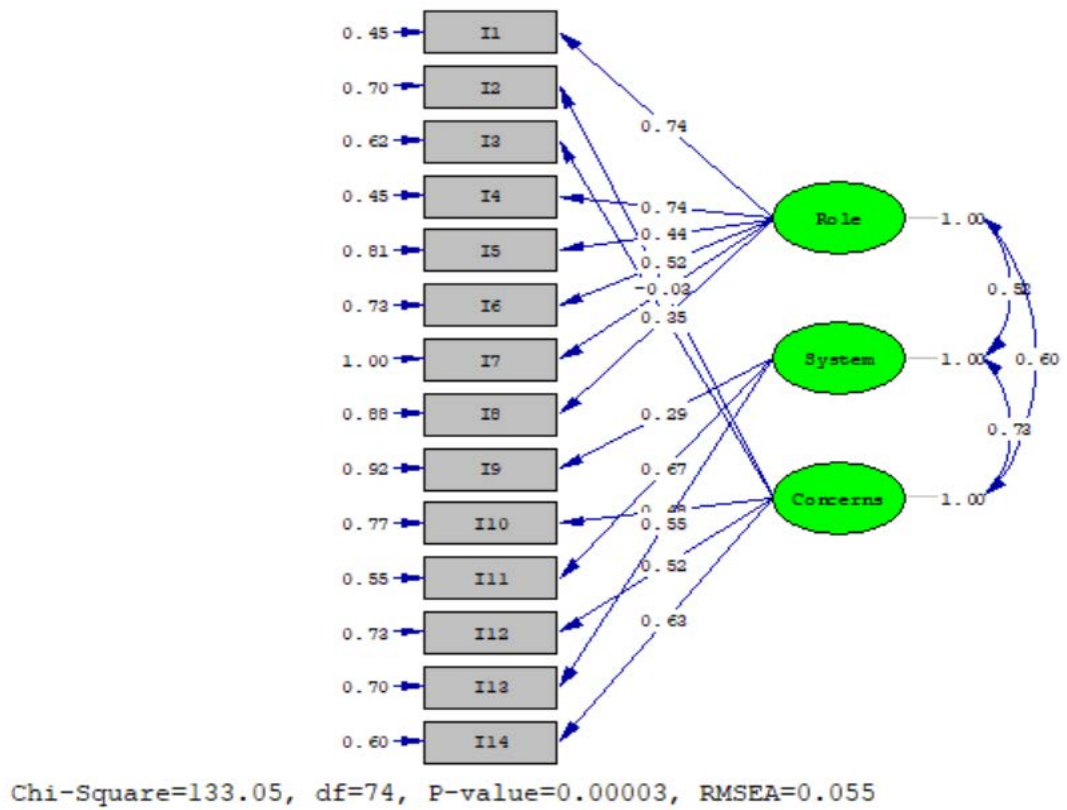


FIGURE 1. CFA standadized solution

Table 2. Item's factor loadings

Dimensions	İtmes	Factor Loaings
role	İ1	.74
	İ4	.74
	İ5	.44
	İ6	.52
	İ7	-.03
	İ8	.35
	İ9	.29
system	İ11	.67
	İ13	.55
	İ10	.48
Concerns	İ2	.35
	İ3	.35
	İ10	.48
	İ12	.52
	İ14	.63

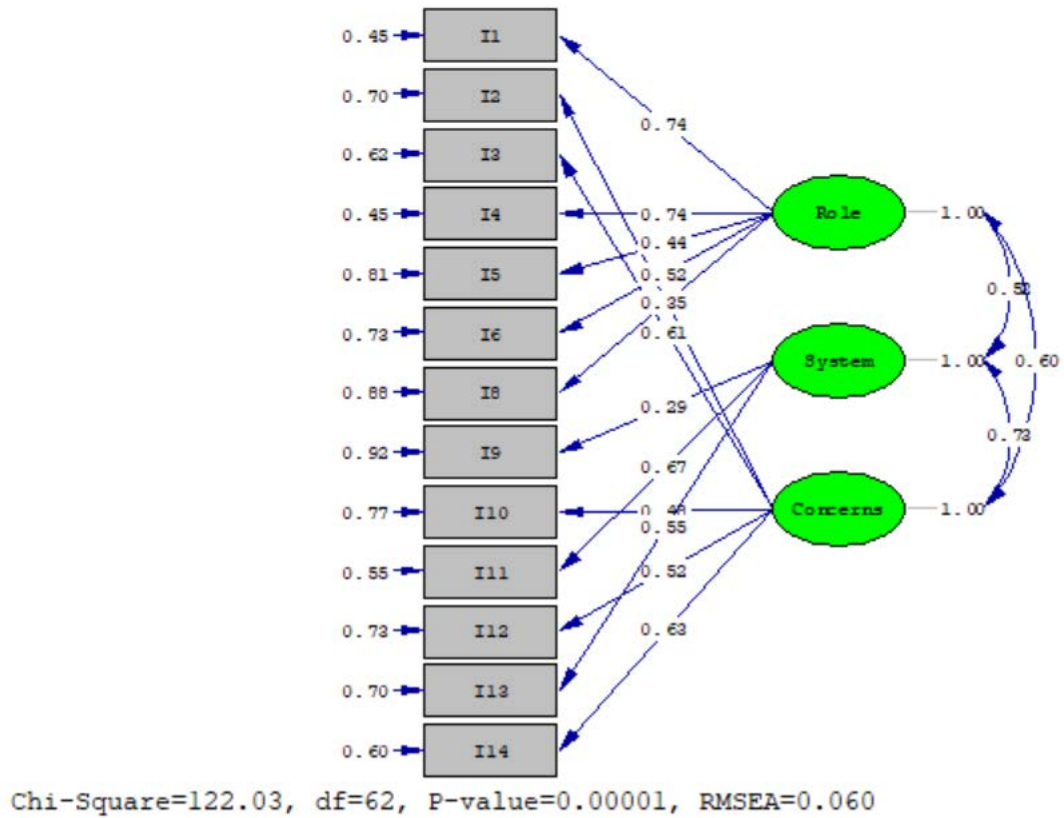


FIGURE 2. CFA standadized solution

Table 3. Item's factor loadings

Dimensions	İtmes	Factor Loaings
role	İ1	.74
	İ4	.74
	İ5	.44
	İ6	.52
	İ8	.35
system	İ9	.29
	İ11	.67
	İ13	.55
Concerns	İ2	.60
	İ3	.60
	İ10	.46
	İ12	.52
	İ14	.63

Criterion Validity

The correlation values for the sub-dimension scores with the total score from the scale and the sub-dimension scores with the total scores from the Teacher Reporting Attitude Scale for Child Sexual Abuse, Scale of Attitude Toward Child Rights, and Melbourne Decision-Making Questionnaire have been calculated in order to determine criterion-related validity. Reporting sexual abuse requires a positive attitude towards children's rights. In addition, the reporting process involves a decision, so it may be related to the decision making style. The obtained coefficients are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Correlation values for the scales' total scores and sub-dimensions

	System	Anxiety	Role of reporter	Total
System				
Anxiety	.15**			
Role of reporter	.06	.31**		
Total	.51**	.85**	.60**	
Highness of Decision Making	-.03	-.18*	-.10	.17*
Vigilance	-.08	-.11	.13**	.16**
Hypervigilance	.01	.27**	.08	-.22**
Procrastination	-.02	.30**	-.15*	-.25**
Buck passing	-.05	.28**	.06	-.19**
Attitude Towards Child Rights	.18*	-.24**	.39**	.24**

* p < .05; ** p < .001

Reliability

Cronbach's α coefficient for the Teacher Reporting Attitude Scale for Child Sexual Abuse has been found as 0.84, which is considered significant proof for reliability. When Cronbach's alpha coefficient is greater than 0.80, a scale is considered to be highly reliable (Özdamar, 2004). Cronbach's alpha for commitment to the role of reporter was found as .79; for trust in the system to respond effectively to the reporting, .60; and for anxiety over the results of the reporting, .77. Total item correlation is between .40 and .69.

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

The aim of this study is to introduce to Turkish the 14-item version of the Teacher Reporting Attitude Scale for Child Sexual Abuse (Walsh et al., 2010) obtained after running a factor analysis in 2012 and to present it to the field for use in teacher-oriented studies. To this end, Walsh et al.'s consent was first obtained via e-mail, and then the process of translating into Turkish was begun. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated for the validity of the scale. Two different scales were used for criterion validity. When running the scale's confirmatory factor analysis, the scale was seen to have three-dimensions and ideal goodness-of-fit values. However, Item 7 of the scale (a guidebook is needed for teachers on reporting child sexual abuse) was decided to be omitted on the grounds that it was both reverse scored and had low factor loading. Thus, the goodness-of-fit values improved slightly.

When it comes to abuse, the first type that springs to mind is sexual abuse. When considering the destructive effects of sexual abuse, noticing and reporting sexual abuse both prevents the child from suffering more and protects others from the same fate. The scale examined in this study is thought to be helpful for identifying the problems teachers face in reporting child sexual abuse and for arranging trainings directed at this issue.

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